

Accountability Performance of Public Elementary School Principals in the Division of Northern Samar, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on the accountability performance of public elementary school principals in the division of Northern Samar, Philippines based on the "Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees". Study revealed that a majority of the principals were in the middle age of their career but a substantial number of them were already near the retirement age, yet only few were young in age; women; enjoyed a maximum of nine (9) relevant administrative trainings; have been in their present position for less than a decade; and finished graduate school education. It was found out in the study that the principals have excellent accountability performance across the determinants, to wit: accountability to the people, responsibility, authority, integrity, competence and loyalty, patriotism and justice, simplicity of lifestyle, and adherence to public interest. Among these determinants, it is only "accountability to people" which surmounted to be with significant difference as regards assessment of the principals' accountability performance. It can also be gleaned from the study that the principals' relevant trainings and administrative experience had associations with their accountability performance in the same way that patriotism and justice, and sex had relationships with authority. All other attributed had no bearing with the accountability performance of the principals.

KEYWORD: *accountability, public elementary school principal, Northern Samar*

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the lingering problems that have plagued the Philippines is accountability and other forms of particularistic behavior through the institutionalization of more accountable governance. The Philippine education system is not impervious to such call for public accountability, transparency, effective management and/or governance to provide quality education. To answer such clamor, the Philippine Congress, enacted Republic Act 9155, otherwise known as the governance of Basic Education Act of 2001. Chapter 1, Sec. 5, Paragraphs a and c, of RA 9155 states that:

Principles of Shared Governance –

- A. Shared governance is a principle which recognizes that every unit in the education bureaucracy has a particular role, task, and responsibility inherent in the office and for which it is principally accountable for outcomes;
- B. The principles of accountability and transparency shall be operationalized in the performance of functions and responsibilities at all levels:

The school principal is one of the most prominent educators in the implementation of the educational programs and thrusts. The position requires him/her to perform both administrative and supervisory functions. They are regarded as the important individuals in the educational ladder. It is on these stages of education endeavor that the leadership behavior of principals reflect the trusts infestation of leadership ability which is required of the position.

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In the context of contemporary times, leadership is a process whereby one guides, directs, influences, or controls the feelings, thoughts or behavior of the group. However, leadership can also be learned. This view implies that leadership behavior can be improved and is not fixed by hereditary of childhood experience (Hagman, 1991).

The effectiveness of an organization is enhanced when every person knows to whom and for whom he is responsible. Unless the lines of responsibility and authority are clearly defined, chaos is inevitable (Hicks, 1990). The survival of any organization, or for that matter, the perpetuation of society itself is contingent upon a continuous supply of persons who are capable of wearing the mantle of administrative leadership.

Educational institutions are human resource-intensive and their successful operation depends largely upon the coordination and orchestration of the energies, the abilities, the powers and the drives of the people who worked for such. Teachers are known to be hard-working and patient people, but unless they are managed by effective administrators their potentials cannot be harnessed to the fullest.

Considering the vital role of the school heads play in the school system, there is therefore a need to appraise the capabilities and accountability of the officials running the schools. The school system has school administrator in all

levels. Whether school administrators are effective leaders or not, need to be looked into. Hence, this study was conducted.

2. Objectives

The study endeavored to answer the hereunder objectives.

1. Determine the profile of the public elementary school principals in terms of:
 - A. sex;
 - B. age;
 - C. in-service trainings attended in relation to administrative functions;
 - D. length of administrative experience; and
 - E. educational attainment.
2. Identify the level of accountability performance of public elementary school principals based on the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards of Public Officials and Employees as appraised by themselves and by their subordinates on the following determinants:
 - A. accountability to the people;
 - B. responsibility;
 - C. authority;
 - D. integrity;
 - E. competence and loyalty;
 - F. patriotism and justice;
 - G. simplicity of lifestyle; and
 - H. Adherence to public interest.
3. Find out the significant difference between the assessment of the school principals and the teachers in the principals’ accountability performance.
4. Ascertain the relationship between the profile of the principals and their accountability performance.

3. Review of Literature

Public accountability is the hallmark of modern democratic governance. Democracy remains a paper procedure if those in power cannot be held accountable in public for their acts and omissions, for their decisions, their policies, and their expenditures. Public accountability, as an institution, therefore, is the complement of public management (Bovens, 2005). As a concept however, public accountability is rather elusive. It is a hurrah-word, like learning, responsibility, or

solidarity – nobody can be against it. It is one of those evocative political words that can be used to patch up a rambling argument, to evoke an image of trustworthiness, fidelity, and justice, or to hold critics at bay.

Nowadays, accountability has moved far beyond its bookkeeping origins and has become a symbol for good governance, both in the public and in the private sector. Moreover, the accounting relationship has almost completely reversed. ‘Accountability’ does not refer to sovereigns holding their subjects to account, but to the reverse, it is the authorities themselves who are being held accountable by their citizens (Bovens, 2005).

Public accountability is not just the hallmark of democratic governance, it is also a *sine qua non* for democratic governance. Modern representative democracy can be analyzed as a series of principal-agent relations (Strom, 2000). The first and foremost function of public accountability, as an institutional arrangement, therefore, is democratic control (Przeworski, Stokes, & Manin, 2009). Secondly, it functions to enhance the integrity of public governance (Rose-Ackerman, 1999). Third, it functions to improve performance (Aucoin & Heintzman, 2000). Together, these three (3) functions provide the fourth function, to maintain or enhance the legitimacy of public governance (Aucoin & Heintzman, 2000).

4. Methodology

This descriptive-evaluative-correlational research included as respondents of the study were the selected public elementary school principals in the division of Northern Samar, Philippines with their teachers to validate their responses on their accountability performance.

The included principals were those who were in the *plantilla* position and have been assigned in their present station for at least two (2) years, not counting 2010-2011. Likewise, only those teachers who have been with such principal for at least two (2) years were included as part of the respondents of this study.

A questionnaire was employed to gather data from the respondents.

5. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Frequency Distribution on the Profile of the Public Elementary School Principals

Age	Frequency	Percentage
30-39	14	14
40-49	46	46
50 and above	40	40
Total	100	100
Sex		
Male	40	40
Female	60	60
Total	100	100
Relevant Administrative Trainings		
Less than 5	31	31
5-9	46	46
10-14	18	18
15 and above	5	5
Total	100	100

Length of Administrative Experience		
2-5	31	31
6-9	39	39
10-13	19	19
14 and above	11	11
Total	100	100
Educational Attainment		
MA Units	27	27
MA CAR	18	18
MA	37	37
PhD Units	9	9
PhD CAR	2	2
PhD	7	7
Total	100	100

Table 1 presents the frequency distribution of the profile of the respondents in terms of sex, age, in-service trainings attended in relation to administrative functions, length of administrative experience, and educational attainment.

On age, majority of the elementary school principals' ages ranged from 40 to 49 years old. This indicates that majority of them were at the middle ages of their career. This was confirmed by Calloin, in his study that a majority of his respondents were of middle age. This exhibits that the school principals are mature enough to administer and decide rationally on issues or problems confronting by the school. Robbins confirmed that older workers had the positive qualities such as experience, judgment, strong work ethics, and commitment to quality. It was also validated by Gilbert that younger supervisors are more involved in relationship-building activities, while older supervisors tend to be more prescriptive in their management style. Clay also authenticated that functional age, as distinct from actual age must be considered in managerial decisions.

On sex, 40% were male and 60% were female.

On number of in-service trainings attended in relation to administrative functions, although 46% had five (5) to nine (9) numbers of relevant trainings attended, more than 30% of the public elementary school principals in Northern Samar had few of them, thus, there is a need for more exposures to trainings and seminars to further enhance their leadership capabilities.

As to the length of administrative experience, majority, 39% rendered from six (6) to nine (9) years and another 31% had it for about two (2) to five (5) years. Hence, majority of the public elementary school principals in Northern Samar were still young in the service.

In terms of educational attainment, 37% were MA degree holders, 27% had MA units, and only seven (7) percent were PhD graduates. This means that public elementary school principals, although not all finished their respective degree programs, have pursued or still pursuing graduate education to boost and enhance their administrative prowess.

Table 2 Level of Performance of Public Elementary School Principals as Appraised by Themselves and their Teachers

Determinants of Accountability Performance	Mean		Average	
	P	T	M	I
Accountability to the people	4.59	4.51	4.55	O
Responsibility	4.48	4.51	4.50	O
Authority	4.49	4.42	4.46	O
Integrity	4.53	4.46	4.50	O
Competence and loyalty	4.39	4.36	4.38	O
Patriotism and justice	4.38	4.42	4.40	O
Simplicity and lifestyle	4.36	4.39	4.38	O
Adherence to public interest	4.41	4.38	4.40	O

Legend: (P) Principals; (T) Teachers; (M) Mean; (I) Interpretation; (O) Outstanding

As could be gleaned from Table 2, the appraisal of both the principals and the teachers on the accountability performance of public elementary school principals based on the Conduct and Ethical Standards of Public Officials and Employees had a respective mean of 4.55 which are all interpreted as "outstanding" along the determinant of accountability to the people. This is followed by an average mean of 4.50 for responsibility and integrity; 4.46 for authority; 4.40 for both patriotism and justice, and adherence to public interest; and the least is 4.38 for both competence and loyalty, and adherence to public interest. However, while the principals exhibit simplicity of lifestyle, the teachers revealed that the principals are low in competence and loyalty.

Table 3 Summary of the Test of Differences in the Assessment of the Principals and Teachers on the Principals' Accountability Performance

T-test	t-Stat	t-Critical	p-Value	Interpretation	Mean	
					Principals	Teachers
Accountability to the people	1.99	1.97	0.05	Significant	4.59	4.51
Responsibility	-0.32	1.97	0.75	Not Significant	4.48	4.51
Authority	1.91	1.97	0.06	Not Significant	4.49	4.42
Integrity	1.75	1.97	0.08	Not Significant	4.53	4.46
Competence and loyalty	0.60	1.98	0.55	Not Significant	4.39	4.36
Patriotism and justice	-0.85	1.98	0.39	Not Significant	4.38	4.42
Simplicity and lifestyle	-0.70	1.97	0.49	Not Significant	4.36	4.39
Adherence to public interest	-0.67	1.97	0.051	Not Significant	4.41	4.38
Over-all Appraisal	1.33	1.96	0.18	Not Significant	4.44	4.42

Table 3 presents the summary of the significance difference of the assessment of the principals themselves and their teachers on the principals' accountability performance.

The table could be explained in a way that the significance of t-stat (or the computed t) in terms of t-critical (or the tabular value) could easily be determined through the P-value such that when the P-value is equal to less than 0.05, the null hypothesis of no difference is rejected. On the other hand, when the P-value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis of has to be accepted. The mean column indicates the type of respondents that has higher assessment on the factors under study.

Thus, as shown in the table, there was a significant difference in the assessment of the principals' accountability performance only with respect to "accountability to the people" with t-stat of 1.99 and P=0.05. The mean of the principals is 4.59 and the teachers' mean was 4.51. All other assessments had no significant difference precisely because their respective P-values were all above .05 level of significance.

This points out that the principals appraised their performance as higher than the teachers in "accountability to the people", while on other determinants of accountability performance, the respondents appraised them alike or analogous to each other. This further connotes that while teachers see their principals as having rendered services for the good of the public and made decisions based on their best judgment, they and their principals had the same level of appraisal as far as rendering public service with varying responsibilities; showing uprightness, honesty and sincerity in service for the public; possessing the needed skills needed in performing office functions and faithfulness in the job; manifesting appreciation and pride of the Filipino culture, heritage, and respect to laws; leads a modest life appropriate to their positions and incomes; and avoiding vested interest in all dealings and commitments as well as deciding in favor of the majority.

Table 4 Summary of the Test of Differences in the Assessment of the Principals and Teachers on the Principals' Accountability Performance

Anova	t-Stat	p-Value	Interpret	F-value	Sig.	F	df	r ²
Accountability to the people								
Sex	-0.83	0.41	NS	2.32	0.05	(S)	5,94	0.11
Age	-1.80	0.07	NS					
Relevant training	2.15	0.03	S					
Administrative Experience	-2.44	0.02	S					
Education Attainment	-1.59	0.11	NS					
Responsibility								
Sex	-1.22	0.23	NS	0.62	0.58	(NS)	5,94	0.03
Age	-0.65	0.52	NS					
Relevant training	0.60	0.55	NS					
Administrative Experience	-1.05	0.30	NS					
Education Attainment	-0.33	0.75	NS					
Authority								
Sex	-4.40	0.02	S	2.25	0.68	(S)	5,94	0.03
Age	-0.16	0.87	NS					
Relevant training	2.56	0.01	S					
Administrative Experience	-2.74	0.01	S					
Education Attainment	-0.34	0.73	NS					
Integrity								
Sex	-0.40	0.69	NS	3.88	0.00	(S)	5,94	0.12
Age	-1.36	0.18	NS					
Relevant training	3.19	0.00	S					
Administrative Experience	-3.88	0.00	S					
Education Attainment	-1.85	0.07	NS					

Competence and loyalty								
Sex	-2.13	0.90	NS	2.01	0.08	(NS)	5,94	0.10
Age	-0.35	0.73	NS					
Relevant training	2.83	0.01	S					
Administrative Experience	-2.43	0.02	S					
Education Attainment	0.67	0.51	NS					
Patriotism and justice								
Sex	-2.13	0.04	S	2.69	0.03	(S)	5,94	0.13
Age	0.31	0.76	NS					
Relevant training	2.89	0.00	S					
Administrative Experience	-2.90	0.00	S					
Education Attainment	-0.65	0.52	NS					
Simplicity and lifestyle								
Sex	-1.02	0.31	NS	3.08	0.01	(S)	5,94	0.14
Age	-1.33	0.19	NS					
Relevant training	2.94	0.00	S					
Administrative Experience	-3.38	0.00	S					
Education Attainment	-1.48	0.14	NS					
Adherence to public interest								
Sex	-0.31	0.76	NS	1.78	0.12	(NS)	5,94	0.09
Age	-1.32	0.19	NS					
Relevant training	2.81	0.01	S					
Administrative Experience	-1.97	0.05	S					
Education Attainment	-0.26	0.79	NS					

Table 4 verifies the existence of relationship between the profile of the respondent-principals and their accountability performance. As could be found out in the table, relevant trainings with t-stat and P-value of 2.15 and 0.03, respectively and administrative experience of t-state and p-value of -2.44 and 0.02, respectively were the only aspects of profile of the principals having relationship with their performance as far as accountability to the people is concerned. All other aspects of the profile had no bearing to the issue. But in terms of the whole relationship, the F-value of 2.32 with 0.05 significance at df (5,94), the profile of the respondent principals could significantly influence their performance as the accountability to the people by about 11%. This means that the more relevant trainings attended and the longer time the principal was in his/her position, the more s/he felt the need to perform better as s/he is more accountable to the people.

In terms of responsibility, all the factors under the profile were not in any way related to the principals' performance that relate to responsibility since all the P-values of any t-stat is less than .05. This is further confirmed by the F-value of 0.62 which is greater than the significance of F=0.58. This finding further substantiated $r^2=0.11$ indicating that the profile could affect the responsibility performance of the principals only by just 3%. This proves that there is no way for which profile could influence the responsibility performance of the principals.

The same table shows that "authority" as a determinant of accountability performance had significant relationship with respondents' profile only as far as sex (t-stat= -2.40 and P-value=0.02), relevant trainings (t-stat= 2.56, P-value=0.01), and length of administrative experience (t-stat= -2.74, P-value=0.01) are concerned. Age and educational attainment had no bearing to the issue in view of their having P-value which are more than .05. However, with the F-value=2.25, significant F=0.03 at df (5,94), the whole profile had a relationship with determinant "authority" of about 12% as revealed by its $r^2=0.12$. This presents the sex, relevant

trainings and length of administrative experience of elementary school principals had bearings as to performing functions related to authority.

Integrity as a determinant of accountability performance was significantly connected with the profile of the principals in terms of relevant trainings (t-stat=3.19, P-value=0.00), and length of administrative experience (t-stat=-3.88, P-value=0.00). Sex, age, and educational attainment have P-values greater than 0.05. Thus, they were not significantly related to "integrity" as a determinant of accountability performance of the concerned principals. But, with the F-value=3.88 and significant F=0.00 at df (5,94), profile of the respondent-principals had an effect on "integrity" by about 17% as shown by its $r^2=0.17$. This means that as the elementary principals attended more trainings and conferences relative to their functions, and as their length of administrative experience increase, there is higher possibility that they could perform better along their functions having effect on integrity.

Competence and loyalty were significantly related to profile only as far as relevant trainings (t-stat=2.83, P-value=0.01), and length of administrative experience (t-stat= -2.43, P-value=0.02) are concerned. All other aspects of the profile such as sex, age, and educational attainment had no connection with the performance of the principals relative to competence and loyalty. But, as a whole, profile had no influence on the competence and loyalty of the principals in view of significant F=0.08 which is greater than 0.05 at df (5,94). In fact, the r^2 would reveal that the whole profile has relevance to competence and loyalty by about 10%. This finding discloses that as the principals attended more relevant trainings, as they acquired more administrative experience, their competence and loyalty to service and country became higher.

Relative to patriotism and justice, sex (t-stat= -2.13, P-value=0.04), relevant trainings (t-stat=2.89, P-value=0.00), and length if administrative experience (t-stat = -2.90, P-

value=0.00) were the only aspects of profile having an impact in the performance of patriotism and justice by the principals. Age and educational attainment whose respective P-values were greater than 0.05 accepted the null hypothesis of no relationship between the involved variables. However, with the F-value=2.69 and significant F=0.03 at df (5,94), it is safe to conclude that the whole profile significantly influenced patriotism and loyalty of the principal by about 13% as shown by its r^2 value. This demonstrates that either the male or the female principal could carry out patriotism and justice better as s/he attends more relevant trainings, seminars, conferences, and increase more his/her administrative experience.

Relevant training (t-stat=2.94, P-value=0.00) and length of administrative experience (t-stat= -3.38, P-value=0.00) were the only aspects of profile of the principals that were significantly related to simplicity of style performed by the respondent-principals. Other aspects of the profile have to accept the null hypothesis of no relationship with simplicity of lifestyle since their respective P-value was greater than 0.05. However, as a whole, the F-value of 3.08 and significant F of 0.01 at df (5,94) discloses that the profile of the principals could influence performance on "simplicity of lifestyle" by about 14% as shown by $r^2=0.14$. This indicates that so long as the principals continue to attend relevant trainings and more exposed to administrative jobs, the carrying out of their functions relative to simplicity in lifestyle will keep on increasing better.

Finally, relevant trainings and length of administrative experience were the only aspects of the profile of the respondents having bearing on the performance of the principals relative to adherence to public interest as shown by t-stat 2.81 and -1.97 respectively, and P-value of 0.01 and 0.05, respectively. On the other hand, the F-value=1.78 and significant F=0.12 at df (5,94) confirms the non-significant relationship between adherence to public interest and the whole profile of the respondents since the r^2 proves that one affects the other by 9%. This signifies that with the good number of relevant trainings attended and longer administrative experience could in a little way induce performance of the principals with respect to their adherence to public interest.

6. Conclusions

Majority of the public elementary school principals in Northern Samar are in the middle age of their careers but a substantial number of them are already near the retirement age, yet only few are young in age; women; attended a maximum of nine (9) relevant administrative trainings; in their position for less than a decade; and finished graduate school education.

They have excellent accountability performance across determinants, i.e. accountability to the people, responsibility, authority, integrity, competence and loyalty, patriotism and justice, simplicity and lifestyle, and adherence to public interest.

There is a significant difference in the assessment of the principals' accountability performance only with respect to "accountability to the people". But they have comparable assessment as to attributes of responsibility, authority,

integrity, competence and loyalty, patriotism and justice, simplicity of lifestyle, and adherence to public interest.

Relevant trainings and administrative experiences are associated with their accountability performance in the same way that patriotism and justice, sex has relationships with authority. All other attributes have no bearing on the accountability performance of the principals.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Public elementary school principals should be required to pursue adequate relevant trainings.
2. Appoint and train more educationally qualified young male principals, and be exposed to a more intense school accountability by way of adapting a fitting test and selection process such as personality test, psychological test, aptitude test, and the like.
3. The education agency through the division level must endeavor for the advancement of accountability performed by the principals such as providing them regular administrative trainings, seminars and workshops; persuading them to properly observe the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers; maintaining personal contact with his staff, teachers, parents, and community; and opening to suggestions for the improvement of teaching-learning process.
4. School officials, from top to bottom, must practice patriotism and justice, integrity, simplicity of lifestyle, and adherence to public interest in the exercise of their authority and responsibility.

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